

in a private semi-permanent encampment in the downtown area for over 20 years, and is one of the area's most active animal advocates.

**"Downtown Dog Man" Benny Joseph, 58, with Terry (left) and Lizzie (right) at his encampment.**



**Mercedes, one of the three dogs she cares for at Downtown Dog Rescue. Mercedes had been abandoned and the organization arranged for them to be adopted into new homes.**

**Many of the dogs we are in contact with, despite not living in a home, are with people twenty-four hours a day and are very happy and well-socialized.**

Working with Downtown Dog Rescue, Joseph has fostered dozens of dogs in need of temporary shelter, and rescued dozens more.

Lizzie was a typical junkyard dog, working in the yard of a local produce packing plant. Lizzie kept running away to be with Joseph until he and Downtown Dog Rescue were finally able to convince the packing plant's owners to let him keep her. Downtown Dog Rescue provided medical treatment for Lizzie, who was severely malnourished, and made

arrangements to have her spayed.

**T**erry is another dog rescued by Joseph, after her original homeless guardian had tied her up and abandoned her in a box underneath a freeway overpass. Downtown Dog Rescue found her and brought her to Joseph for fostering and rehabilitation. Sadly, she initially kept running away from Joseph's site, going back to the spot of her abandonment in order to wait for her original guardian. It was weeks before Terry finally gave up her search and settled down. Today, Terry and Lizzie happily live together with the downtown dog man.

Downtown Dog Rescue is a not-for-profit organization operating solely on adoption fees and donations and grants solicited on their behalf by an affiliate program, Friends for Animals. Later this year, as a fundraiser, Downtown Dog Rescue will offer a calendar for sale featuring pictures of many of downtown's dogs

and their guardians. Weise is careful to point out that while Downtown Dog Rescue does offer referrals and other assistance to homeless pet guardians, all funds donated to the program are spent directly on animal care.

Science Diet also donates dog food to the program on a regular basis, but much of the funding for their animal rescue operations comes directly from the pockets of Tuttelmondo and Weise themselves. The owners of Modernica, the furniture factory managed by the dog rescuers, provide space in their plant for the operation, including an area for dogs up for adoption, and allows the pair to use company trucks for transport.

Professional dog trainer Leslie Stein donates her time to Downtown Dog Rescue to rehabilitate rescued dogs and offers group classes at half-off to adoptive families and their new charges. Dr. Edward Simon from L.A. Central Animal Hospital also donates his time and clinic facilities to the program. Day or night, he will treat any dog brought in by Weise and Tuttelmondo, in any condition, and without an appointment.

Weise is pleased about the resources the program has been able to gather and the help they have been able to offer. "We wanted to make a difference. We can't help everybody, but we can at least help the dogs and the people we come into contact with. If everyone cared for just the dogs in their area, this would all be taken care of."

For those who want to help, the program is always looking for blankets, canned food, dog toys, used collars and leashes. Anyone who would like to donate goods, or is interested in purchasing the calendar featuring dogs and their guardians who have been helped by Downtown Dog Rescue, should call Lori Weise at (213) 683-1963, or write to Friends for Animals, Attn: Downtown Dog Rescue, P.O. Box 5280, North Hollywood, CA 91616, before sending or dropping off goods.

More information about this inspirational program and its needs is available on the Internet at [www.downtowndogrescue.com](http://www.downtowndogrescue.com) or [www.friendsforanimals.org](http://www.friendsforanimals.org). We congratulate Lori and Richard for this innovative program that benefits so many two and four-leggers. 🐾

*Jennifer Wolfe is the new Associate Editor of Animal Guardian. She has worked in the not-for-profit community for over five years and currently lives with her husband and three cats, Annabelle, Sally and Hollis, in Los Angeles, CA.*